SYNOPSIS

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT

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Education is crucial to development as it provide the individual with adequate skill for participating in various economic activities. Education enables human beings to understand the interrelationship among the tangible phenomena surrounding them and give skill to translate the knowledge into action. Acquisition of education helps workers to take advantage of technical changes, which increases their productivity and earnings. (Asok Basu, 2002). Realizing the importance of education, the Government of India formulated various measures to promote education. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy emphasized the role of State to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years. The National policy on education in 1968 and 1986 also gave a stimulus for the expansion of education. These promotional measures helped to improve literacy rate. Between 1951 to 2001 the literacy rate in India increased from 16.67 percent to 65.67 percent.

Though, we were able to achieve an increase in general literacy rate, educational status of the disadvantaged groups, in particular, of the scheduled tribes is in pathetic condition both in respect of coverage and achievement even after sixty years of independence. Being illiterate, the tribal people cannot become acquainted with the development in science and technology. Due to illiteracy, people of these communities are totally ignorant of basic principles of health which makes them an easy prey to diseases. For a tribal family to send a boy or a girl is essentially a matter of economics and entails dislocation in the traditional pattern of their labour force. Many tribals refrain from sending children to school due to loss of good characteristic of the labour force and the fear of expenditure on education (Venkataramana, 2001).

The welfare and development of tribals has been given high priority right from the beginning of First Five Year plan, still it remains as most backward group in India on the three most important indicators of development i.e health, education, and income. As such, education is most important element in the development of tribal community. It is a powerful instrument to change the values and attitude of the people and to create in them the urge of the necessary motivation to achieve social mobility and social ascendaency.

In India, the provision of tribal education is important since the tribal population of 84 million accounting for 8.21 percent of the total population in 2001 is larger than any other country in the World. On an average, difference between the literacy rate of general population and that of scheduled tribes has been around 15 percent. While at the national level, literacy among males was estimated as 75.9 percent and for females as 54.2 percent, the corresponding figures with regard to tribal males and females were found to be 59.2 percent and 34.8 percent in 2001(Source: Census of India, 2001).The dropout rate was higher for scheduled tribe students compared to others. The important problems of tribal education are insufficient number of schools, lack of resources in tribal schools, language barrier and problem in social adjustment faced by many tribal boys and girls who are often discriminated by upper caste children. The main constraint in the community was less number of girls having attended schools because of parental poverty and non-supportive parental attitude towards female education.

At the State level, in Tamil Nadu there were 6, 51,321 tribal people accounting for 1.05 percent of the country's tribal population in 2001.(Source: Census of India, 2001) At the District level in Nilgiris there were 28373 Scheduled tribes accounting for 3.72 percent of the total population in Nilgiris. The main tribal communities found in the district are Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyas and Kattunaikkan.

Todas have their own dialect called as Toda dialect, without script. They lived in unique half-barrel shaped houses and their village or settlements which form 5 to 8 maximum 15 houses was called as 'mund'. The property of Todas consists of the house, household materials, jewellery, buffaloes and cultivatable lands. The **Irulas** speak 'Irula Dialect' which is South Dravidian language of the Tamil-Malayalam sub-groups. The **Kotas** speak their own dialect-Kannada language mixed with Tamil words. The Kota village is called a Kokkal, which represents thirty and sixty houses called 'Keris'. The Kotas are cattle keepers. The **Kurumbas** of Nilgiri district are entirely different from other groups. They speak their own dialect similar to Kannada. Their major occupations were hunting and farming. The **Paniyas** are found in Gudalur and Pandalur. They are working as workers in the fields. They speak paniya bhasa mixed with Malayalam and Tamil words. Their settlement is called 'Paddis' which represents a few houses. Though

the overall literary rate for the district was 81.44 percent, the tribal literacy was only 46 percent. (Source: Census of India, 2001).

Need for the Study

The rationale for the study is

- The social development and economic development of tribals is interlinked with their educational status. Education has proved the best means for their development, but not reached the majority of the scheduled tribes.
- The Indian Council of Social Science Research and National Council of Education Research and Training have initiated surveys on tribal education, but it needs no emphasis that the national surveys should be supplemented by intensive studies on individual tribal groups, so as to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of the problems and perspective on tribal education in-different regions.
- Most of the literature on tribal education in India was descriptive in nature. But there is need to put the variables into theoretical frame work and analyse the variables at different levels of education.
- Very few attempts have been made to construct the composite educational development index for tribal population.

Scope of the Study

In the present study, an attempt was made to examine socio-economic characteristics of different tribal groups- Todas, Irulas, Kotas, Kurumbas and Paniyas, attitude towards education, reasons for enrolment and dropout. Further, the study tried to find out the gender disparity in enrolment and dropout and disparity in education between different tribal groups. An attempt was also made to construct composite education index for different tribal groups and identify the problems faced by the respondents relating to education of tribal children. Such an attempt will pave way:

- To enact suitable policy measure to encourage tribal children to go to school and also to reduce dropout among tribal children
- To suggest suitable areas for the policy intervention.
- To evolve tribal group specific policies to improve the educational status and

- To suggest suitable programmes for developing awareness about various tribal welfare programme with special reference to education.

Objectives

The basic **objectives** of the study are:

- To study the demographic and socio-economic profile of the selected tribal population;
- To find out the attitude towards education of tribal children;
- To study the enrolment rate and dropout rate of tribal children ;
- To find out the gender disparity in education among the tribal population ;
- To analyse the inter tribe variation in education ;
- To identify the determinants of demand for education among the tribals ;
- To find out the problems of tribal education and
- To suggest suitable measures to improve the educational status of the tribal population.

Hypothesis formulated

1. There is no significant association between attitude towards education of tribal children and socio economic characteristic of households.

2. The enrolment of tribal students is not significantly associated with education level of the head of the family, size of the family, income of the family and size of landownership.

3. There is no gender disparity in enrolment and dropout.

4. The size of the family, income, family property and distance to school/college do not have significant impact on dropout.

5. The age of wife, age of husband, education of wife, education of husband, total number of school going children, number of male children, number of female children, earnings, landownership, cost of education, distance and monthly consumption expenditure are insignificant determinants of educational status of tribal households.

6. There is no disparity in the educational status of different tribal groups.

Methodology

Selection of the Area

The current study is related to Nilgiris district due to the fact that Nilgiris district occupies 8th rank in scheduled tribe population of Tamil Nadu constituting about 4.36 percent of tribal population of Tamil Nadu.(Source: Census of India ,2001)

Selection of Sample

The study adopted multistage stratified random sampling. In the first stage the taluks of the study were selected- Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri, Gudalur, Pandalur and Kundha. The Taluk Kundah was omitted since it has the lowest tribal population and also due to inadequate transport facilities. In the second stage, the revenue villages for the study were selected. For the study purpose, the revenue villages having more number of tribal households were selected – Nanjanadu, Sholur, Burliar, Hulical, Kotagiri, Denadu, O'valley, Devershola, Cherangodu and Nelliyalam. In the third stage the households of the study were selected. Firstly base line survey was conducted in all the households to identify the households having the population in the age group of 6 to 24. After identification, for final data collection, the households for the study were selected based on the criteria of accessibility and availability of transport facilities. From each taluk 100 households were selected and hence the total of size of sample is 500.The details of sample selection are given in Table I. The required information for the study was collected by administering an interview schedule to head of the household.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS SURVEYED IN NILGIRI DISTRICT

S.No	Taluks	Revenue Village	Tribes	No of household
1	Udhagamandalam	Nanjanadu, Sholur	Todas	100
2	Coonoor	Burliar, Hulical	Irulas	100
3	Kotagiri	Kotagiri, Denadu	Kotas	100
4	Gudalor	O'valley, Devershola	Kurumbas	100
5	Pandalur	Cherangodu, Nelliyalam	Paniyas	100
Total				**500**

Theoretical Frame Work

The theoretical model is purely based upon the new household economics framework. The household utility function consists of commodities like education (i.e. human capital per child), number of children and other Hicksian composite consumption commodities. Some of the pioneer studies which have used this model are Becker (1965; 1976), Michael (1974), Willis (1973), Grossman (1972). For the Indian context, studies made by Rosenzweig and Evenson(1977), Duraisamy(1984), Arumugam(1984) and Srinivasan(1987) have employed this model.

The current study tried to develop a household model which provides a framework to investigate the demand for schooling. By demand, the study means enrolment in schools/colleges.

The household's utility function takes the following form with the given commodities as its element.

$$U=U(Z_e, Z_n, Z_s) \qquad (1)$$

Where U is the utility function, assumed to be twice continuously differentiable and strictly concave, Z_e= amount of human capital per child, Z_n= number of children and Z_s = other Hicksian composite consumption commodities.

Each of these arguments of the utility function is assumed to be produced by the household through the combination of market purchased goods (X_i, i=e, n, s) and the time inputs of some or all the members (T_{ij}, j=h,w,c where h is the husband, w is the wife and c is the child) according to linear homogenous production function with the given level of technology.

$$Z_i = f(X_i,T_{ij},E),\ I = n,e,s \qquad (2)$$

Where E is a vector of environmental variables like health, age, education of the parents etc., which is assumed to affect the efficiency of the production process.

The study tried to derive a demand function for education, which is a function of goods prices, wage rates and environmental variables. Accordingly, demand function for education can be estimated as

$$Z_i^* = Z_i(P_i, W_0, W_1, W_2, E) \qquad (3)$$

where the consumption of commodity 'I' is a function of the prices of market goods, P_i wage rates of husband, wife and children w_0,w_1,w_2 and environmental variables E.

Construction of Composite Educational Index

The current study tried to estimate composite educational index for each of the household based on literacy rate and gross enrolment rate of each household. As a first step, educational attainment index was calculated by using the following formula,

$$\text{Educational attainment index} = \frac{\text{Actual literacy rate-Minimum literacy rate}}{\text{Maximum literacy rate- Minimum literacy rate}}$$

where, Maximum value = 100 and Minimum value = 0

Similarly, gross enrolment index of the household was calculated as follows,

$$\text{Gross enrolment Index} = \frac{\text{Actual gross enrolment -Minimum gross enrolment}}{\text{Maximum gross enrolment - Minimum gross enrolment}}$$

Actual gross enrolment is computed by adding up of enrolment at different levels of schooling.

Maximum value =100 and minimum value =0.

Following Nauriyal and Bimal Kishore Sahoo(2010) the study tried to estimate the composite educational index for the households as follows:

$$\text{Composite educational index} = \frac{\text{2 literacy rate + enrolment index}}{3}$$

Techniques of analysis

Besides averages, percentages and graphs, techniques like probit model, chi-square test, Sopher's disparity index, discriminant analysis and Garrett's ranking technique were used.

Findings of the study

Socio-economic profile of the selected tribal households

Of the total tribal population in the selected households more than fifty percent represents the school/college going population in the age group of 6-24. In all the selected blocks, half of the existing population represents, school/college going age group of 6-24. For all categories of tribes the number of females exceeds that of males. The estimated sex ratio ranged from 1098.16 for Kotas to 1178.57 for Kurumbas. The head of the family happened to be illiterate in some of the selected households. The number of

illiterate head were higher among the Paniyas. The major occupation for the selected tribal groups was found to be agriculture. On an average, the monthly income ranged from Rs.3230 for Paniyas to Rs 8435 for Todas. More than 50 percent of the selected households were of nuclear type. On an average the land ownership ranged from 2.73 acres for Irulas to 3.64 acres for Kotas. Majority of the respondents have property worth of Rs 20000-Rs 40000 and amount of savings was found to be meagre for all tribal groups. The incidence of the borrowing was lesser among Todas as compared to other groups. There exists difference in percentage of expenditure allotted for education. While Todas allotted 70 percent, the other groups allotted only 52 to 60 percent for education.

Attitude towards education

The study tried to find out the attitude of the head of the family towards tribal education among children. Of the total respondents 70 percent were having positive attitude towards education and 30 percent were having negative attitude towards education. In their view, the benefits of education were getting a job, gaining knowledge, supplementing family income and improve the standard of living.

Enrolment

There exists difference in enrolment of tribal students in relation to education of head of household, family size, family income and landownership. There were difference in number of students enrolled at different stages of education- primary, secondary, higher secondary level and college. The enrolment rate was higher among Todas (93.89 percent).For overall tribal population, the enrolment at the primary level (93.65 percent) was found to be higher as compared to secondary and higher secondary level. The male enrolment was higher among all the tribal groups. The basic reasons for enrolment were employment and better earnings. The major reasons for non-enrolment were poverty, inadequate facilities in school and poor health.

Dropout

There exists difference in dropout of tribal student in relation to education of head of household, family size, family income of landownership. There were differences in number of students dropping out at different stages of education. For overall tribal population, the dropout rate was higher at college level (15 percent) and higher secondary level (13.91 percent). The dropouts were higher among Paniyas as compared to other

groups. The major reasons for dropout were non-availability of school in the nearby area, long distance, inadequate facilities in school, lack of awareness, tough syllabus and difficult language and script.

Disparity in education

The gender disparity index in overall enrolment was estimated as 0.2653 indicating low disparity in enrolment. The gender disparity was found to be lower at primary level and more at secondary and college level among all the groups.

The gender disparity index in overall dropout was estimated as 0.4284. The gender disparity in dropout was found to be higher at primary level as compared to secondary and higher secondary level.

The inter tribe disparity index in enrolment was found to be higher among Todas Vs Kotas (0.4067) and lower among Todas Vs Paniyas (0.1210). The inter tribe disparity in dropout was found to be higher among Todas Vs Paniyas (1.6463).

Cost of education

The educational expenses incurred by the family comprise of expenses on notebooks, uniform, exam fees, transport etc. On an average the tribal households spend Rs 2396 on notebooks, Rs 800 on exam fees and Rs 290 for transport. Of total expenditure, 54.95 percent was spent for notebooks, 18.35 percent was spent for exam fees and 6.65 percent on transport.

Composite Educational Index

On an average the estimated composite educational index was higher for Todas .74. while it was 0.66 for Kotas, 0 .68 for Kurumbas, 0.58 for Irulas and 0.55 for Paniyas.

Problems of tribal education

The study noted the basic problems of tribal education as non-availability of school, long distance, inadequate facilities, tough syllabus, inconvenient timings, unfamiliar language, lack of teachers, difficult language and sick parents. The application of Garrett's ranking technique indicated that long distance was the major problem in tribal education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the followings measures were recommended to improve the educational status of tribes in Nilgiris district.

1. Establishment of secondary and higher secondary schools within easy accessibility;
2. Providing regular transport facilities;
3. Appointment of adequate number of teachers in the school;
4. Motivating all the parents to send the children to school and not to work and
5. Creating awareness to the tribal families about the education facilities provided by the Government.

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